

What to Know About Breastfeeding



Congratulations!

Your baby has arrived, and there's one thing that he or she will always need – food and nutrition. That's where you come in. If you are able to do so, breastfeeding is wonderful for you and your baby during the first year of life. It helps him or her grow healthy and strong – and provides protection from many illnesses.

In the United States, most new moms (more than 80 percent) breast-feed their babies and about 55 percent do so for at least six months.

Breastfeeding Benefits for You

- May help in weight loss after delivery
- Always ready – no mixing or heating
- Less expensive
- Safe, simple, and natural
- Decreases risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Fewer doctor visits with sick baby

Breastfeeding Benefits for Your Baby

- Creates closeness between mother and baby
- Best source of nutrition
- Fresh, clean, right temperature
- Easy for baby to digest
- Fewer allergy problems
- Decreases illnesses like diarrhea, constipation, breathing problems, and ear infections

Breastfeeding in the Hospital

- Breastfeed your baby as soon as possible – within the first hour if you can.
- Keep your baby in your room with you. This helps you get to know your baby. You can also breastfeed at the first sign of hunger (hands to mouth, licking lips, squirming). Pick your baby up, change his or her diaper, and put to the breast before crying begins.

We Offer Maternity Care Right In Your Neighborhood!

High-Risk Case Management

If you are having problems with your pregnancy, our case managers can help and answer any questions you may have.

Questions?

Call our Patient Assistance Line at **(888) 787-1712**

Dial 711 for The TTY-Based Telecommunications Relay Service, Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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- Ask for help! Both you and your baby are learning a new skill.
- Ask for pain relief if needed. Most pain medications are safe to take as directed, but always check with your doctor or pharmacist.

At Home

- Your baby will need to eat about 8-12 times in 24 hours, about every 2-3 hours.
- A single breastfeeding lasts about 15-20 minutes on one breast. You should see active sucking and hear swallowing.
- Finish the first breast first. If the baby is still hungry, offer the second side.

How to Safely Prepare and Store Expressed Breast Milk (Pumped)

By following safe preparation and storage techniques, nursing mothers and those who take care of breastfed infants can safely feed your baby, too!

Storing Expressed Breast Milk

- Be sure to wash your hands before and after using your breast pump or handling breast milk.
- When collecting milk, be sure to store it in clean containers. Avoid using ordinary plastic storage bags or formula bottle bags, as these could easily leak or spill.
- If delivering milk to a childcare provider, clearly label the container with your child's name and date.
- Clearly label the milk with the date it was expressed to make sure you use the oldest milk first.
- Do not add fresh milk to already frozen milk within a storage container. It is best not to mix the two.
- Do not save milk from a used bottle for use at another feeding.

Safely Thawing Breast Milk

- As time permits, thaw frozen breast milk by transferring it to the refrigerator or by swirling it in a bowl of warm water.
- Avoid using the microwave to thaw or heat bottles of breast milk.
 - Microwaves do not heat liquids evenly. Uneven heating could easily burn a baby or damage the milk.
 - Bottles may explode if left in the microwave too long.
 - Excess heat can destroy the nutrient quality of the expressed milk.
- Do not re-freeze breast milk once it has been thawed.

What If You Can't Breastfeed?

Not every woman can breastfeed for a number of reasons – and if this is the case for you, do not be hard on yourself. Breastfeeding is a wonderful way to strengthen your connection with your child, but it isn't the only way. At feeding time, hold your infant close to you and make eye contact.

Remember: Your relationship with your child won't be based only on your ability to nurse him or her. How you respond to cries, how often you hold and play with your baby, and how you are as a parent matters more than how you feed your baby. Talk to your baby's pediatrician about the type of formula that's right for your child and your lifestyle.

Knowledge is Power

If you have questions about your pregnancy, ask your doctor. You can also visit the following websites:

March of Dimes: www.marchofdimes.org

First 5 California: www.first5california.com

Remember: If you have any questions or concerns at any time, make sure you contact your doctor right away.



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